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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the range of methods and approaches used by teachers in Year 2 in teaching reading and writing, and the assumptions underlying these approaches. Headteachers of 122 nationally representative maintained schools in England and Wales completed a brief questionnaire giving mostly statistical information about their school. A subsample of 26 schools were visited for in-depth case studies. Samples of pupils' writing were submitted by teachers along with assessments on a five-point scale. Results indicated that: (1) there was a wide range of performance among Year 2 children in reading and writing and more evidently the latter; (2) many teachers found it difficult to differentiate among different levels of pupil performance; (3) the assessment procedures had little direct application to teaching strategies adopted; (4) assistance for pupils with special needs was difficult to obtain on a systematic basis; (5) there were marked differences between the teachers' competence as effective managers of children and time; (6) the classrooms of effective teachers had a layout that was compartmentalized and designed to promote opportunities for independent learning; (7) schools differed greatly in the extent to which they drew on assistance from parents or other adults in the classroom; (8) most teachers claimed to use a variety of methods in teaching reading and writing; and (9) while the children were generally seated in groups, they seldom worked collaboratively. (Two tables and three figures of data are included; appendixes include the selection of schools and pupils, the pupil literacy profile, case study interviews, and an article on children's writing at age 7.) (RS)